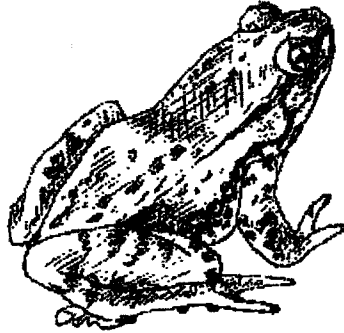


Mountain Yellow-legged Frog

Rana muscosa
Family Ranidae



BLM Status: Sensitive (CA)
Global Rank: G2
State Rank: S1 (NV); S2 (CA)

Distribution: Found in the Sierra Nevada of California from around 4,500 ft. (1,370 m.) to over 12,000 ft. (3,650 m.) in elevation, with an isolated population in Butte County, north of Feather River Mountains of Southern California from Pacoima River south with southernmost populations on Mount Palomar. A population on Mount Rose, Nevada, probably previously occurred around Lake Tahoe.

Description: Reaches up to over 3 in. (7.8 cm.) in snout-vent length. Yellowish or reddish brown above, with black or brown spots or lichenlike marking. Toe tips usually dusky. Undersides of hind legs and sometimes entire belly is yellow or orange. Dorsolateral folds present but frequent indistinct. Adult males have swollen, darkened thumb base. The voice is a faint clicking sound. It apparently lacks vocal sacs.

Reproduction: Breeds in May to August as



*Current range of the
mountain yellow-legged frog*

soon as meadows and lakes are free of ice, and March to June at lower elevations when high water in streams subsides. Eggs laid in rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes with peak activity in June. Mean clutch size is 200 to 300 eggs (range 100 to 500). Tadpoles may overwinter.

Food: Eats a variety of invertebrates which it catches at the edges of streams and ponds.

Habits: The only frog in the Sierra highlands of California. This is a frog of sunny riverbanks, meadow streams, isolated pools, and the mountain lakes of southern California. Prefers sloping banks with rocks or vegetation to the water's edge. Seldom found more than two or three jumps from water. Chiefly diurnal.

Management Implications: Numbers reduced at high mountain lakes when trout introduced. Populations in southern California appear to be dying out.

Important References: Stebbins, R.C. 1985. A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians. The Peterson Field Guide Series. Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, NY; Verner, J., and A.S. Boss. 1980. California wildlife and their habitats: western Sierra Nevada. USDA Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Station, GTR PSW-37, Berkeley, CA.